



# Ganja International School

## newsletter, June 2007

### Featured interview: Shahla Amiraslanova, Reception year teacher



Shahla (23) is a graduate of English from Tblisi State University, and has recently got engaged. She has been working her way up at GIS. She was an assistant for two years and this year she was a teacher for Reception i.e. 4-5 year old children. She is interviewed by Margrethe Hjellum:

Q: What kind of lessons do children at that age have?

A: One of the lessons is PSD: 'Personal Social Development'. No matter what kind of themes we are teaching, we can adopt PSD into it: If we talk about animals, I can for example ask the children if it is alright to hit animals. The

children like to talk about things like this, and they need to be encouraged to use their own words and expressions: Children understand a lot. Conversations are the key to connect with them in these matters.

Q: Apart from PSD, what other lessons do you have?

A: Every day I have five different lessons: That could be Darkroom-English, where I use a projector to show pictures for story time. I also teach English, maths, science, music, PE (Physical Education), art, craft, knowledge and understanding of the world, and ICT (Information Communication Technology).

Q: What do the children do in the computer lessons?

A: We use a CD where we have special programs with maths and English. They get trained in using the mice and in general and ideas of how to use a computer and its possibilities. But English is my favourite subject. I have a special curriculum; 'Playway to English' with a lot of materials for activities which I really enjoy planning and carry out. And obviously the children like it too! There are a lot of songs, videos, activities which all are very well integrated and easy to use.

### The end of the school year

GIS's fourth full year as a school has come to an end! The end of a school year should be marked by outings and a concert and GIS is no exception...



### A trip to Hacikand

The whole school made a trip to Hacikand, a village about an hour from Ganja from where you normally get a very good view of Kapaz Mountain. It was foggy! But the children still used their imagination to paint and draw

← mountains anyway!

### The GIS School Concert

The concert started with every class putting on its own program. For example, Year 2 put on the Greek drama 'Odysseus' in English.

All the children wore Greek robes and Yusif

(7) tearfully recited the last line: "My dear father, I will find you.

Otherwise, I cannot forgive myself!"

For the final part the school got together at the Puppet Theatre, across the road from GIS, for more acts, dancing and singing.



Some GIS children at the Puppet Theatre for the concert

After the concert children left for a well-earned rest. But it was not the start of a rest for everyone... For the following week the teachers were busy packing boxes; workers came in to move the piano, the safe and other furniture; painters came in to do some repairs to the rooms. They also found time to fit in a day's training from a visiting American professor of TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages). Glenn Deckert is an associate professor of at a US university who has taught in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. So where are we moving to?

### Looking forward: accommodation

On Thursday we paid the amount set by the state to privatise a kindergarten – a very suitable building for us. Does that mean we have bought it? Unfortunately not. We cannot feel confident until the documentation process is completed, and this could take more than a month. If we are not able to complete this purchase we will be in serious trouble.



### Looking forward: finance

Of the full amount for the purchase, we had about 70% in hand in either Azerbaijan or England,.

We needed to borrow a further \$25,000 as short-term loans to make the first payment of \$200,000.

To complete the purchase we need to make a final payment of \$50,000 when the process has been completed, in not more than three months.

**If you would be willing to contribute to purchasing this building in any way, please let us know.** As a means of fund-raising Simon will be doing various activities over the next few weeks, including attempting to swim across this stretch of water! Please refer to the separate letter about this.



### Looking back: Trond Langen

The end of a year is a good time for looking back as well as forward. A little over four years ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2003, Trond Langen, a Norwegian humanitarian worker in Ganja for most of the past ten years, called a small meeting together and suggested that we establish a school. Three of the people present at that meeting (Trond, Simon Bartlett and Nick Ensor) are still on the GIS Board. Margrethe Hjellum interviews him.



Q: What do you think GIS means for Ganja as a society?

A: Education is getting more and more important, in Azerbaijan as in the rest of the world. GIS is offering another way of pedagogical thinking, with more focus on the individual child. I think that GIS can improve the school system in the town by being an example.

Q: What are your dreams for GIS's future and how can our supporters around the world support the school in order to get there?

A: I hope that GIS will be a good quality school that is self-sustainable. Friends of the school around the world can support the school through prayer, financial support, and maybe take a year or two as teachers here among the hospitable people in Ganja.

If you know of anyone else who might be interested in following GIS's progress through these newsletters, please pass on a copy, or invite them to contact us. We would like to extend GIS's circle of friends. Thank you for all your interest.

Ganja International School  
Mirza Abbas Abbaszade 43, Ganja  
Republic of Azerbaijan AZ 2002  
+994 22 56-96-74 / 56-72-23  
General enquiries: [gisadmin@azeronline.com](mailto:gisadmin@azeronline.com),  
Newsletter editor: [simon@ganja-international-school.org](mailto:simon@ganja-international-school.org)  
[www.ganja-international-school.org](http://www.ganja-international-school.org)